

Our Ref: 10942P1 WO/JCM.lm

Date: 5 January 2004

**BY FACSIMILE AND POST**

European Patent Office  
International Preliminary Examination Section  
D-80298  
Munich  
GERMANY

Dear Sirs

**International Patent Application No. PCT/GB03/00352**  
**Reckitt Benckiser (UK) Limited et al**

In response to the Written Opinion dated 5 November 2003, we enclose new copies of pages 13 to 16 to replace those pages on file. To assist the Examiner, we also enclose copies of pages 13 to 16 including the amendments shown in manuscript.

The limitation of claim 17 has been included into claims 1 and 2. No amendments have been made to the description. Once a claim has found to be allowable, corresponding amendments will be made to the description and remaining independent claims.

**Novelty**

The novelty of claim 17 is acknowledged by the Examiner in the Written Opinion. The inclusion of the limitation of claim 17 into independent claims 1 and 2 therefore renders claims 1 to 16 novel. (The Examiner's comments with respect to (old) claims 18 to 22 are noted. We intend to deal with these objection in the national phase of this application.)

**Inventive Step**

The invention as claimed has been amended such that the cavity is an interior of an article of footwear or a storage space within an article of furniture. The Examiner will note that the method is now drawn to absorbing water vapour and combating odour in the **interior** of footwear or articles of furniture. In other words the method is drawn to absorbing water vapour and combating odour in confined spaces where it is not always possible or convenient for the consumer to visually assess either the cavity or the package.

The prior art does describe dehumidifying and/or odour absorbing packages for closets, fridges, shoes and the like, but the particular invention as described in this application is novel and as such, presents certain benefits over the prior art in such applications. In particular, certain tangible benefits arise from using the present invention to absorb water vapour and combat odour in such cavities.

Firstly, the benefit of using a starch or cellulose thickener or a filler which acts as a thickener or gelling agent for the water inside the package causing thickening or gelling of the contents of the package. This means the condition of the product can be assessed by feel and the condition of the package can serve as a tactile cue as to:

- how much water has been absorbed;
- the condition of the cavity in which the package was placed; and
- the end of life of the package.

Secondly, the benefit of using a starch or cellulose thickener or a filler which acts as a thickener or gelling agent for the water inside the package causing thickening or gelling of the contents of the package means that if the wall of the package becomes punctured there is much less leakage than if the liquid inside the package was 'watery' i.e. less viscous. The Examiner will appreciate that this is of great benefit where the package is placed in footwear. It is easy to forget that the package has been inserted into the interior of the shoe and should the foot be inserted into the shoe with the package still present, with the present invention, there will be no bursting effect.

These are benefits neither taught nor contemplated in the teachings of the prior art. It is submitted that the proposed solutions to the problems plaguing the absorbing water vapour and combating odour in the **interior** of footwear or articles of furniture are not obvious to those skilled in the art and have been arrived at using inventive faculty.

It is believed that it would now be appropriate to issue a clear International Preliminary Examination Report.

We intend to deal with any remaining objections during the national and regional phases of this application.

Form 1037 is enclosed to enable you to acknowledge receipt.

Yours sincerely  
RECKITT BENCKISER plc

John C McKnight

Claims

1. A method of absorbing water vapour and of combating  
malodour within a cavity, the method comprising the  
5 step of introducing into the cavity a package  
comprising a wall material which retains particulate  
contents and is permeable to water vapour, the  
contents comprising a dehumidifying compound, an  
odour-combating compound, and a filler comprising  
10 starch or a starch derivative or cellulose or a  
cellulose derivative, wherein the cavity is the  
interior of an article of footwear or a storage space  
within an article of furniture.
- 15 2. A method of absorbing water vapour and of combating  
malodour within a cavity, the method comprising the  
step of introducing into the cavity a package  
comprising a wall material which retains particulate  
contents and is permeable to water vapour, the  
20 contents comprising a dehumidifying compound, an  
odour-combating compound, and a filler which acts as a  
thickener or gelling agent for the water inside the  
package, wherein the cavity is the interior of an  
article of footwear or a storage space within an  
25 article of furniture.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the  
contents further comprise a filler which is an  
alkaline compound able to neutralise foot acids.
- 30 4. A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said alkaline  
compound is sodium bicarbonate.

5. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the dehumidifying compound is capable of absorbing at least its own weight of moisture.
- 5 6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the dehumidifying compound is a water absorbing metal salt or oxide.
7. A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the  
10 dehumidifying compound is selected from calcium chloride and magnesium chloride.
8. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the dehumidifying compound is present in an amount of  
15 at least 10wt% of the weight of the dry contents.
9. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the dehumidifying compound is present in an amount of no more than 95wt% of the weight of the dry contents.  
20
10. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the odour-combating compound is a zeolite.
11. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein  
25 the odour-combating compound is present in an amount at least 0.5wt% of the weight of the dry contents.
12. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein  
30 the odour-combating compound is present in an amount of no more than 25wt% of the weight of the dry contents.

13. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the filler comprises starch or a starch derivative.
14. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein  
5 the filler constitutes at least 10wt% of the weight of the dry contents.
15. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein  
10 the filler constitutes no more than 80wt% of the weight of the dry contents.
16. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the contents further comprise a fragrance.
- 15 17. A package comprising a wall material which retains particulate contents and is permeable to water vapour, the contents comprising a dehumidifying compound, an odour-combating compound and a filler comprising starch or a starch derivative or cellulose or a  
20 cellulose derivative, in admixture.
18. A package comprising a wall material which retains particulate contents and is permeable to water vapour, the contents comprising a dehumidifying compound, an  
25 odour-combating compound and a filler which acts as a thickener or gelling agent for the water inside the package, in admixture.
19. A particulate composition comprising a dehumidifying  
30 compound, an odour-combating compound, and a filler comprising starch or a starch derivative or cellulose or a cellulose derivative, in admixture.

20. A particulate composition comprising a dehumidifying compound, an odour-combating compound, and a filler which acts as a thickener or gelling agent for the water inside the package, in admixture.

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21. A method of absorbing water vapour and combating malodour within a cavity, or a package or particulate composition for the same purpose, substantially as described herein.

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the method comprising the  
to the cavity a package  
which retains particulate  
le to water vapour, the  
dehumidifying compound, an  
and a filler which acts as a  
for the water inside the

claim 1 or 2, wherein the  
e a filler which is an  
neutralise foot acids.

claim 3, wherein said alkaline  
ate.

any preceding claim, wherein  
is capable of absorbing at

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14. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the filler constitutes at least 10wt% of the weight of the dry contents.

5 15. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the filler constitutes no more than 80wt% of the weight of the dry contents.

10 16. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the contents further comprise a fragrance. <sup>to claims 1 and 2</sup>

~~17. A method as claimed in any preceding claim~~ wherein the cavity is the interior of an article of footwear or a storage space within an article of furniture. <sup>to claims 1 and 2</sup>

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17 18. A package comprising a wall material which retains particulate contents and is permeable to water vapour, the contents comprising a dehumidifying compound, an odour-combating compound and a filler comprising starch or a starch derivative or cellulose or a cellulose derivative, in admixture.

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18 19. A package comprising a wall material which retains particulate contents and is permeable to water vapour, the contents comprising a dehumidifying compound, an odour-combating compound and a filler which acts as a thickener or gelling agent for the water inside the package, in admixture.

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30 20. A particulate composition comprising a dehumidifying compound, an odour-combating compound, and a filler comprising starch or a starch derivative or cellulose or a cellulose derivative, in admixture.



20 21. A particulate composition comprising a dehumidifying  
compound, an odour-combating compound, and a filler  
which acts as a thickener or gelling agent for the  
5 water inside the package, in admixture.

21 22. A method of absorbing water vapour and combating  
malodour within a cavity, or a package or particulate  
composition for the same purpose, substantially as  
10 described herein.